

R E M A R K S

Reconsideration of this application, as amended, is respectfully requested.

THE CLAIMS

Claims 1 and 6 have been amended to clarify the feature of the present invention whereby the code coat formed in the second step (performed immediately after the first step of printing the code) is an ink code coat, as supported by the disclosure throughout the Detailed Description of the invention in the specification of the present application.

No new matter has been added, and it is respectfully requested that the amendments to the claims be approved and entered.

THE PRIOR ART REJECTION

Claims 1-4 were rejected under 35 USC 103 as being obvious in view of the combination of JP 11-263062 ("Saito et al") and USP 6,095,050 ("Figov"). This rejection, however, is respectfully traversed with respect to the claims as clarified hereinabove.

As recognized by the Examiner, Saito et al does not disclose performing a second step of printing a code coat immediately after the first step of printing the code. For this reason, the

Examiner has cited Figov as disclosing the missing teaching of Saito et al.

It is respectfully pointed out, however, that Figov merely discloses printing a lacquer or varnish coating over an ink jet printed image such as a bar code. In Figov, the lacquer or varnish coating is provided to prevent smearing or smudging of the ink jet printed image. This teaching in Figov, however, has nothing to do with the printing technique of the claimed present invention whereby an ink code coat is formed immediately after printing a code in a manner so as to prevent offset doubling.

More specifically, according to the present invention as recited in clarified amended independent claims 1 and 6, an optically readable code is printed in a first step using a first printing plate and a first ink, and an ink code coat is printed in a second step, performed immediately after the first step, to completely cover the code using a second printing plate and a second ink having a property of not affecting the operation of reading the code. Significantly, the method of the claimed present invention is able to effectively print the code and the ink code coat while avoiding the problem of offset doubling because according to the present invention as recited in amended independent claims 1 and 6 the ink code coat is formed to completely cover the code on the printing medium.

That is, according to the claimed present invention, as shown in Fig. 11, the dots 3 of the dot code 1 are printed on the sheet of paper 7 at the first printing unit 7, and the ink code coat 5 is printed by the second unit 20 immediately thereafter so as to completely cover dots 3, as shown at the right side of Fig. 11. Since, according to the claimed present invention, the ink code coat 5 completely covers the dot code 1 (dots 3), the dots 3 are never brought into direct contact with the blanket cylinder 21 of the second printing unit 20. Therefore, there is no opportunity for the blanket cylinder 21 to pick up part of the dots 3, and offset doubling can be avoided.

It is again respectfully submitted that Saito et al clearly does not disclose, teach or suggest forming a code coat immediately after printing a dot code so as to completely cover the code, as according to the present invention as recited in amended independent claim 1 and new independent claim 6.

In addition, it is respectfully submitted that Figov does not at all disclose, teach or suggest printing an ink code coat, in a second step performed immediately after a first step of printing an optically readable code, to completely cover the code using a second printing plate and a second ink having a property of not affecting the operation of reading the code, as according to the present invention as recited in amended independent claims 1 and 6. In this connection, it is again pointed out that

the lacquer or varnish disclosed in Figov is merely used to cover an ink jet printed image such as a bar code, and that this teaching has no application whatsoever to the printing technique of the claimed present invention which utilizes first and second inks to print an optically readable code and an ink code coat in a manner so as to prevent offset doubling.

It is respectfully submitted, moreover, that even if the teachings of Saito et al and Figov were combinable in the manner suggested by the Examiner, the result would merely be to print a lacquer or varnish code coat over the code of Saito et al, after the code of Saito et al is printed. In this connection, moreover, it is respectfully pointed out that the problem of offset doubling which occurs in the printing technique of Saito et al would not be solved by the addition of the lacquer or varnish code coat of Figov.

In view of the foregoing, it is respectfully submitted that the present invention as recited in amended independent claims 1 and 6, and claims 2-4 depending from claim 1, clearly patentably distinguishes over Saito et al and Figov under 35 USC 103.

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Entry of this Amendment, allowance of the claims and the passing of this application to issue are respectfully solicited.

If the Examiner has any comments, questions, objections or recommendations, the Examiner is invited to telephone the undersigned for prompt action.

Respectfully submitted,

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